

First among these, confining ourselves to authentic records, was James Bridger, to whom belongs the honor of discovery. It happened in this wise. During the winter of 1824-5 a party of trappers, who had ascended the Missouri with Henry and Ashley, found

we have no certain account. Two have been noticed in the western parts, as salt lake about the thirty-ninth degree of latitude, the western limits of which are unknown, and the lake of Timpanogos, about the forty-first degree, of great but unascertained extent.

CHAPTER II.

ADVENT OF TRAPPERS AND TRAVELLERS.

1778-1846.

INVASION BY FUR HUNTERS—BARON LA HONTAN AND HIS FABLES—THE FORT
UTAH GEOGRAPHIC IDEA—DISCOVERY OF THE GREAT SALT LAKE—JAMES
BRIDGER DECIDING A BET—HE DETERMINES THE COURSE OF BEAR RIVER
AND COMES UPON THE GREAT LAKE—HENRY, ASHLEY, GREEN, AND
BEECHWORTH ON THE GROUND—FORT BULL AT UTAH LAKE—PETER
SKELLEN OGDEN—JOURNEY OF JEDEDIAH S. SMITH—A STRANGE COURT-
NEY—PEOPLE SMITH—WOLSKILL, YOUNT, AND BURTON TRAVEL THE
COUNTRY—WALKER'S VISIT TO CALIFORNIA—SOME OLD MAPS—THE
BARTLESON COMPANY—STATEMENTS OF BIDWELL AND BELDEN COM-
PALED—WHITMAN AND LOVELLOY—FREMONT—PACIFIC COAST IMMIGRA-
TIONS OF 1845 AND 1846—ORIGIN OF THE NAME UTAH.

HALF a century passes, and we find United States fur hunters standing on the border of the Great Salt Lake, tasting its brackish waters, and wondering if it is an arm of the sea.¹

1 There are those who soberly refer to the Baron La Hontan and his prodigious falsehoods of 1698 for the first information of Great Salt Lake. Some among the many fabulous wonders reported he somewhere on the western side of the continent placed a body of bad-tasting water, Stansbury, *Exzell*, 151, does not hesitate to affirm 'that the existence of a large lake of salt water somewhere amid the wilds west of the Rocky Mountains seems to have been known vaguely as long as 150 years since.' Perhaps it was salt, and not silver, that the Winnebagoes reported to Carter, *Travel*, 33-6, as coming down it. Caravans from the mountains lying near the heads of the Colorado River, Warren, in *Pacific Railroad Report*, xi, 34, repeats and refutes the La Hontan myth. He says, 'the story of La Hontan excited much speculation, and received various additions in his day; and the lake finally became representative on the published English maps.' Long before this date, however, reliable information had been received by the Spaniards, and the same may have come to English traders; so that by 1826 reports of the existence of such a sheet may have reached civilization. It is needless to say that neither La Hontan nor Carver ever received information from the natives, or elsewhere, sufficient to justify map-makers in placing a large lake in that vicinity. In Gordon's *Historical and Geographical Memoir of the North American Continent*, published in Dublin in 1820, it is written: 'Concerning the lakes and rivers of this as yet imperfectly explored region we have little to say. Of the former

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